



COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT DIVISION Community Development Board - Meeting Minutes

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Regular Meeting of the Community Development Board August 6, 2024

Board Members Present: Rebecca Noell, Joe Stockburger, Kathleen Candelaria, James Allen, Erica Doornek, Ali Pistora

Board Members Excused: None

Board Members Absent: Hans Abbey

City Council Representative: Denise Joy

Staff Present: Brenda Beckett, Carly Collins, Dina Harmon, Tam Rodier, Wyeth Friday

Guests: Jake Brown, Marketing Account Representative, Knife River

Welcome / Introductions: The Community Development (CD) Board met in the 6th Floor Conference Room of the Miller Building, 2825 3rd Avenue N. Board Chair Rebecca Noell called the meeting to order at 3:00 p.m.

Announcements:

Brenda Beckett apologized for the lack of conference room furniture; it has already been moved to the Stillwater Building (new City Hall). The chairs were scrounged from what has not yet been moved.

Tam Rodier said she attended GL Development's open house for their proposed 24 affordable apartments to be built near the intersection of Jackson Street and King Avenue East. GL Development recently completed the Jackson Court apartments and the CD Board recommended, and City Council recently approved, funding for their Mitchell Court project. She shared copies of the open house flyer. GL Development plans to apply for funding for this newest project in the future.

Public Comment: None

Meeting Minutes: Board member James Allen made a motion to approve the June 4, 2024, minutes as written and distributed. Board member Kathleen Candelaria seconded the motion. There was no additional discussion. A vote was taken, and the minutes were unanimously approved.

CD Board Membership Changes

Rebecca Noell said both Jenna Martin and Valerie Courtney recently resigned. The two open positions (one At-Large and one Low-Mod) are currently being advertised with an application deadline of August 26th. Ali Pistora said she would let the task force leadership know. Brenda said applications can be downloaded from the [Boards & Commissions](#) page on City website. Brenda said former Board member Jim Corson may apply.

Tam said the first Tuesday in November falls on election day, November 5; which is also a holiday for City staff. She asked what the Board's preference would be for the meeting. Board member Rebecca Noell made a motion to move the meeting to 3:00 p.m. Tuesday, November 12, 2024, with the location to be determined by staff. Ali Pistora seconded the motion. There was no additional discussion. A vote was taken, and the motion was unanimously approved.

Staff Reports:

- **First Time Home Buyer Program (FTHB):** Dina said two homes closed since the last Board meeting and another closing is scheduled soon. Rebecca asked how many closings there were in FY24 (to be included in the Board's annual report). Dina responded she would check, but she thought it was 10 or more.

Kathleen Candelaria said she is seeing a lot of people waiting until September to list their home, or purchase a home, because an interest rate drop is anticipated.

Dina said the Steffanich property closed!

- **Affordable Housing Development (AHD):** Dina noted the City Council approved the \$1.2 million in HOME funding for the Mitchell Court Affordable Housing Project at their July 8, 2024, meeting, as recommended by the CD Board. The City Council also approved up to \$500,000 in Tax Increment Finance Funds from the South Billings Boulevard Urban Renewal District. GL Development closed on the purchase of the property July 15 and they plan to close on the partnership August 15. Brenda said the City's legal staff did an in depth review of the legal documents; the first in a very long time.

Brenda added that the City Council recently approved the updated Foreclosure Program Resolution; which allows for the purchase of vacant lots. This might allow us to site additional modular homes in the future.

- **Foreclosure Acquisition / Housing Rehabilitation Program:** Tam shared the following updates:

Steffanich Property: The sale of the property was closed June 25, 2024!

1709 St. Johns Avenue: Construction is well underway and the changes are amazing. She shared pictures and explained a few details.

1302 Parkhill Drive: This HUD-foreclosed 3-bedroom, 2,566 square foot house, built in 1952 recently became available and the City submitted a bid. The bid was accepted and the closing is scheduled for August 26. Inspections have been scheduled (home inspection, lead-based paint, asbestos). It will very likely be the most expensive rehab project to date.

Foreclosure Acquisition / Rehabilitation Program Survey: Staff developed a Foreclosure Program Survey and mailed it to purchasers of past Foreclosure Program homes (clients can choose to complete and return a paper survey, or use a link / QR code to complete online). Three survey responses have been received to date and all have been very positive. Survey results will be shared with the CD Board and with the City Council.

- **CDBG / CDBG-CV Projects:**

North Park: The contractor is still working to complete final punch list items.

- **Billings Metro VISTA Project (BMVP):** Carly Collins reported the following:

- Two new members will be joining BMVP. Louisa Spector will serve with the Montana Department of Health and Human Services to provide increased access to mental healthcare throughout the state. Cole Reisdorf will serve at Tumbleweed to increase food security for at-risk youth and young adults. New VISTA Orientation is next week.
- She completed and submitted the annual progress report since the last meeting. VISTA members raised \$130,000 and recruited more than 100 volunteers!
- She is preparing the Request for Proposals for organizations to apply for VISTA members starting full-year terms in January / February 2025.

- **HOME-ARP Discussion, Recusals, & Recommendations:** Carly explained the need for CD Board members to complete, sign, and submit a Recusal Form prior to discussing and taking action on HOME-ARP recommendations to the City Council. Brenda added that the City Council would be required to do the same

prior to taking action on CD Board recommendations. One Board member recused themselves from discussing and voting on recommendations associated with HomeFront Partners and Alternatives, Inc.

Board member Rebecca Noell made a motion to recommend the City Council allocate up to \$100,00 each to HomeFront Partners and Alternatives, Inc. with the resulting Subrecipient Written Agreements to include a “contract renewable” feature. Board member Joe Stockburger seconded the motion. There was no additional discussion. A vote was taken by the six Board members who had not recused themselves and the motion was unanimously approved.

Board member Rebecca Noell made a motion to recommend the City Council allocate up to \$100,00 each to RiverStone Health, Native American Development Corporation, District 7 Human Resource Development Council, and United Way – Continuum of Care with the resulting Subrecipient Written Agreements to include a “contract renewable” feature. Board member Ali Pistora seconded the motion. There was no additional discussion. A vote was taken, and the motion was unanimously approved.

City Council Work Session Preparation: Brenda explained Community Development programs would be discussed with the City Council two or three times in the next couple of months. On August 19, a work session presentation has been scheduled to educate the City Council on the Consolidated Plan process. There will likely be a follow-up work session to discuss HOME and other issues. Then in September, the CAPER will be presented to the City Council.

Brenda said she would share the draft Consolidated Plan presentation for the August 19 work session. She encouraged Board members to ask questions, make suggestions, and provide feedback, which she will use to refine the presentation.

CD Board members said they liked:

- How it asks the City Council for their input and involvement,
- Outlines limitations, and
- Highlights policy areas over which the City Council has authority.

Wyeth Friday said he thinks it is important to convey to the City Council that staff may not always be able to provide specific, detailed responses to their questions; staff may have to do research before responding.

Denise Joy commented that some presentation colors are unreadable to the City Council when they are projected on the big screens (e.g., white text on blue background, etc.). Brenda asked for more detail or examples. Denise responded that Andy Zoeller’s presentations are usually readable.

Brenda said she hopes the feedback from the City Council will specify if they want more public hearings and if so, when on the timeline. Someone said it was important not to “gloss over the timeline with the City Council.” They need to fully understand timeline constraints.

CD staff strongly encouraged Board members to attend the August 19 City Council work session, even if they choose not to speak. Board members can at least be introduced to the City Council so they will recognize the variety and depth of experience on the Board. The meeting begins at 5:30 p.m. in the Council Chambers, 2nd Floor of the Police Facility, corner of 3rd Avenue N and North 27th Street. Parking is available either in the Park 3 garage or on the street.

Brenda said CD Board participation during the CAPER public hearing on either September 9 or 23, 2024, would also be appreciated. She will provide details as soon as they are set.

Board & Commission Annual Report to City Council:

Tam said the CD Board is required to make an annual written report of Board activity to the Mayor and City Council. Copies of the 2023 report were distributed as an example. Tam said she also tried to anticipate what the Board might like to include in the 2024 report, and passed out copies. The Board mentioned the following:

- Outcomes – Add:
 - Number of FTHB families assisted in FY24,
 - Mitchell Court Affordable Housing Project,
 - VISTA accomplishment numbers, and
 - HOME-ARP Allocation Plan and other pertinent details.
- Challenges – Add:
 - Received limited funding applications,
 - Need a full roster of Board members,
 - State closed Section 8 waiting list,
 - City Council stating they do not believe CD staff have been responsive to their goals / objectives,
 - City Council vote in April was one vote shy of shuttering the Community Development Division, and
 - City Council vitriol comments during April City Council session.

Tam agreed to make the edits and send a revised draft to Board members via email with the September meeting agenda. The Board can finalize at their September 3 meeting.

Neighborhood Concerns & Happenings:

Denise Joy noted the City Council’s “Priorities Discussion” may also be on the August 19th Council Work Session Agenda.

Ali suggested the Consolidated Plan presentation might also be appropriate to share with Task Fores.

Next Meeting: Board Chair Rebecca Noell adjourned the meeting at approximately 5:00 p.m. The next regular in-person meeting will be held at 3:00 p.m. on September 3, 2024.